The Black Market Files

B Alan Bourgeois · Opening excerpt · 1 of 2

The rain lashed against the cracked motel window, its relentless rhythm pounding like a war drum against the silence. The dim glow of a flickering neon "No Vacancy" sign cast a sickly red hue across the peeling wallpaper. The air inside smelled of stale cigarettes and damp carpet—the kind of place where ghosts checked in and never checked out.

At the edge of the creaky bed, the journalist sat hunched over, his breath shallow, his fingers clamped around the small, unassuming flash drive. It was absurd how something so tiny could hold the weight of the world’s darkest secrets. He had uncovered corruption before—drug cartels, corporate espionage, government cover-ups—but this?

This was different.

The names on the list were gods among men—billionaires, politicians, media moguls. The kind of people who didn’t just wield power; they were power. For years, they had built their fortunes on the backs of trafficked children, orchestrating their crimes behind private jets, exclusive islands, and untouchable offshore accounts.

And now, they knew he had it.

Reading sample — continued

A tremor rolled through his fingers as he clenched the drive tighter. His chest felt like a vice, his pulse a frantic drum against his ribs. He had to think, had to move, had to—

Bzzzzt.

The burner phone on the nightstand vibrated, cutting through the thick silence.

No Caller ID.

His breath hitched. They had found him.

For a fleeting second, he considered letting it ring, pretending it wasn’t real. But this was real. Every second of it. His thumb hovered over the screen before he exhaled and swiped to answer.

A pause. Too long. Then—

"You have one chance to walk away."

The voice was deep, smooth, detached. The kind of voice that belonged to men who signed death warrants over five-star dinners.

"Drop the story. Destroy the drive. Disappear," the voice said. But Albert knew better. They will kill him no matter what he did.

Albert swallowed, his throat suddenly dry. A bead of sweat slid down his temple. He forced his voice to stay even. "And if I don’t?"

A silence stretched across the line—thick, suffocating. Then the voice returned, eerily calm.

"Then you disappear in another way."

The line clicked dead.

The motel room plunged into darkness.